



NEWS RELEASE

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Bill Condit to Lead Effort to Identify and Mitigate Historic Oil and Gas Impacts on Public Lands

Bill Condit, a special assistant to BLM State Director Linda S.C. Rundell, has been named to lead an effort with the oil and gas industry, ranchers and the public to identify and mitigate impacts of historic oil and gas development on public lands in New Mexico before current resource protection stipulations and mitigation were required by the government.

Condit will pull together an advisory team to examine the magnitude of the problem on public lands; private lands where mineral ownership was retained by the government, and possibly allotted Indian lands will also be included in the effort.

“Our task is to look at the impacts of older oil and gas wells, pipelines and other infrastructure,” said Condit, “and work with our partners to make recommendations for rehabilitating these areas.”

Much of the current tension between traditional users of public lands in the San Juan and Permian Basins of New Mexico stems from unmitigated impacts from wells and infrastructure authorized by the BLM before standards and procedures under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 were implemented. Older oil and gas leases often lacked stipulations regulating development and requiring restoration of disturbed areas. Drilling permits today contain detailed ‘conditions of approval’ which incorporate the findings of environmental, archaeological and cultural surveys of areas to be opened to development.

Condit will solicit input from both majors and independents in the oil and gas industry as well as the ranching, recreational and environmental communities concerned with restoring and maintaining public lands to sustain their uses of surface, which include livestock grazing, recreation and protection of habitat for fish and wildlife.

After determining the scope of the problem, the team will conduct a needs assessment to estimate the costs of efforts to return forage types and amounts to productive levels. The team will also be expected to search for funding sources to achieve the levels of restoration envisioned by the participants.

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